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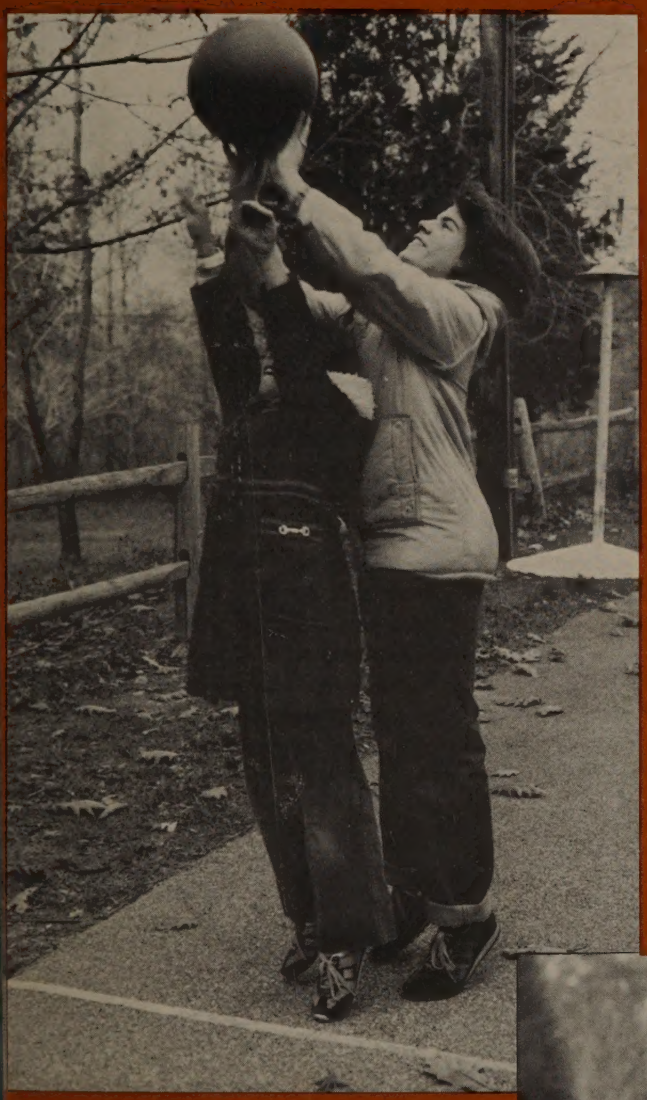

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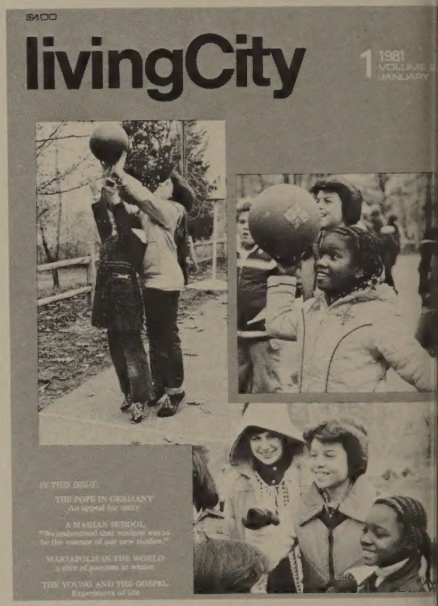

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The Pope in Germany
a plea for unity

Pope John Paul II visited Germany from November 15th to the 18th. He was the first pontiff to visit this country since Pius VI in 1782. Before leaving, the Holy Father had said at the Angelus on November 9th: "I consider this visit particularly important also from the ecumenical point of view. . . . I commend to everyone's prayer this important and responsible service of the Bishop of Rome."

Following are the words which the pope addressed to the members of the Evangelical Church of Germany (Lutheran) on November 17th in Mainz. The pope said he wanted to stress ". . . how we are impelled by the imperatives of this hour to overcome the differences that divide us, and to give witness to our growing unity."

Earlier the same day, the Holy Father had met with Jewish leaders. We are also publishing his words to them in which he praised the efforts by German Jews and Catholics to build bridges between their traditions.

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TO THE LUTHERANS

"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:7). With these words of the apostle of the Gentiles I salute you and all those whom you represent. I heartily thank those who made this meeting possible in the country where the Reformation originated. I owe a particular thanks to you, Mr. President of the council, for the words that have helped us to seize the dimensions of this moment and even more of our Christian mission. In the knowledge of this, may it be possible for us to hope, with Paul, to be "mutually encouraged by our common faith" (Rom. 1:12).

Our meeting this morning is a very profound symbol for which I can express myself with the words of an ancient hymn: "Already the dawn appears on the horizon, as the dawn he raises in us. The Son is all in his Father and the Father all in the word." (*Lucis Largitor Splendide*, hymn at morning prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, Latin edition, for the Monday of the second week in the year.) Our common desire is that Christ may shine forth in our midst and in this land as the light of life and of the truth.

I recall in this moment that in 1510-1511 Martin Luther came to Rome as a pilgrim to the tomb of the princes of the apostles, but also as a seeker and a questioner. Today I come to you, to the spiritual heirs of Martin Luther. I come as a pilgrim to make through this meeting in a changed world a sign of union in the central mysteries of our faith.

Many things press upon our mind in our fraternal encounter, many more than we can express in the short time we have at our disposal and with our limited forces. Allow me to say at the beginning of our conversation, what moves me particularly. I do this, referring to the witness of the Letter to the Romans, that letter so decisive for Martin Luther. "This letter," he wrote in 1522, "is the real masterpiece of the New Testament and the purest Gospel."

In the school of the apostle of the Gentiles we can today consider that all of us have need of conversion. There is no Christian life without penance. "There is no real ecumenism without a change of heart." (Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, 7). "Who are you to pass judgment on another's servant?" (Rom. 14:4). We wish rather to admit together our fault. That holds also for the grace of unity.

"All men have sinned" (Rom. 3, 23). We should see and say this in all earnestness and draw the consequences therefrom. More important is it to recognize ever more profoundly what consequences the Lord himself draws from the failures of man. Paul reduced it to these terms: "Despite the increase of sin, grace has far surpassed it" (Rom. 5:20). God does not cease to "have mercy on all" (Rom. 11:32). He gives his Son, gives himself, gives pardon, justification, grace, eternal life. We can confess this together.

You know that decades in my life have been marked by the experience of the challenges launched on Christianity by atheism and by non-belief. I have consequently all the more clearly before my eyes how important is our common profession of Jesus Christ, his words and his work, in this world. And how we are impelled by the imperatives of this hour to overcome the differences that divide us and to give witness to our growing unity.

Jesus Christ is the salvation of all of us. He is the one mediator, "through his blood God made him the means of expiation for all who believe" (Rom. 3:25). "We are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1) and with one another. In the power of the Holy Spirit we are his brothers and, truly and essentially, children of God. "But if we are children, we are heirs as well, heirs of God, heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

Reflecting on the Confession of Augsburg, and through numerous exchanges, we have realized anew that we believe and profess together all this. The German bishops have so witnessed in their pastoral letter, "Thy Kingdom Come" of January 20, 1980. They have said to Catholics: "We are happy to discover not simply a partial consensus on some truths but rather a full accord on fundamental and central truths. This makes us hope for a unity also in the sphere of

our faith and of our life where, at this moment, we are yet separated."

All due thankfulness for what we have in common and what unites us cannot blind us to what yet divides us. We should in the best manner possible look not to what may further divide us, but rather to what transcends the division. We cannot simply stop with the affirmation: "We are and remain forever divided and in opposition one to the other." We are called to tend to one another, in a dialogue of truth and of love, toward full unity in the faith. Only full unity gives us the possibility to coming together with the same mind and the same faith at the one table of the Lord.

What this effort above all consists of we can draw from the lectures held by Luther in the years 1516-1517 on the Letter to the Romans. He teaches that "faith in Christ, by which we are justified, does not consist only in belief in Christ, or more exactly, in the person of Christ, but in believing in that which is of Christ."

"We must believe in him and in that which is his." To the question, "But what is this, then?" Luther pointed to the church and to its authentic teaching. If the difficulties that persist between us concern only "ecclesiastical prescriptions of human institution" *(Confessio Augustana, VIII)*, we can and should eliminate them immediately. According to the conviction of Catholics, the dissent turns on "that which is of Christ," on "that which is his," namely his church and its mission, its message, its sacraments and its ministries ordained to the service of the word and of the sacrament. The dialogue inaugurated since the council has made us realize progress in this regard. In Germany itself important steps forward have been made. This fills us with confidence in the face of problems not yet solved.

We must remain in dialogue and in contact. The questions to confront together require of their nature a more ample treatment than that which is possible for us here today. I hope that we shall find together the way for pursuing our dialogue. Certainly the German bishops and the collaborators of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity will contribute their assistance.

Pope John Paul II meets with Bishop Löhse, who is president of the Council of the Evangelical Churches in Germany.

We must leave nothing untried. We must do everything that unites. We owe this to God and to the world: "Let us, then, make it our aim to work for peace and to strengthen one another" (Rom. 14:19). Each one of us should say with Paul, "I am ruined if I do not preach it (the Gospel)" (1 Cor. 9:16). We are called to be witnesses of Christ. His message requires that we render witness together. Allow me to repeat what I said June 25 of this year on the occasion of the jubilee of the Confession of Augsburg: "The will of Christ and the signs of the times spur us to a common witness in the growing fullness of truth and of love."

Great and serious are the tasks that await us. If we count only on our own resources we shall lose courage. Thank God, "the Spirit too helps us in our weakness" (Rom. 8:26).

Trusting in him, we can carry on our exchanges, we can rise to the deeds that are required of us. Let us begin with the most important deed, let us pray. Before the incomprehensible grace of God we pray with the apostle of the Gentiles.

"How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable his judgments, how unsearchable his ways! For 'who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has given him anything so as to deserve return?' For from him and through him and for him all things are. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36).

TO JEWISH LEADERS

I thank you for the friendly and sincere words of greeting. This meeting was my desire on the occasion of this apostolic visit and I thank you for responding to my wish. May God's blessing stand over us in this hour.

1. If Christians see each other as brothers and must treat each other accordingly, how much more should this be true when they stand before the Jewish people.

In the "Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Judaism" in April of this year, the bishops of the Federal Republic of Ger-

many began: "Who meets Jesus Christ, meets Judaism." May I make these words my own.

The faith of the church in Jesus Christ, the son of David and son of Abraham (Mt. 1:1) contains in reality what the bishops in their declaration call "the spiritual legacy of Israel for the church" (Section II), a living legacy that must be understood and treasured in its profundity and its richness.

2. The concrete brotherly relation between Jews and Catholics in Germany takes on a quite special value in the dark background of the persecution and attempted elimination of the Jewish people in this country.

The innocent victims in Germany and elsewhere, the destroyed or dispersed families, the irretrievably lost cultural values and art treasures are a tragic demonstration of where discrimination and contempt for human dignity can lead, especially when this is inspired by perverse theories of the alleged differences in the value of races or the division of mankind into "worthy" and "worthy of life," as opposed to "without value" and "unworthy of life." Before God all men are equally worthy and important.

In this spirit, Christians during the persecution worked, often in danger, to prevent the sufferings of their Jewish brothers or to moderate them. I extend to them, at this time, my recognition and thanks.

But there were also others who as Christians went to the end in the affirmation of their adherence to the Jewish people along the road of suffering with their brothers and sisters. Such was the great Edith Stein, in religion Theresa Benedicta of the Cross, whose memory is held justly in high honor.

I would also like to mention Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber, who through their creative familiarity with the Hebrew and with the German languages established a truly admirable bridge for a profound encounter between the two cultures.

You yourselves in your greetings mentioned that among the many efforts to create a new common life with Jewish fellow citizens, Catholics and the church have made decisive contributions. This recognition and the corresponding necessary cooperation on your part fills me with joy.

On my part, I must express my grateful admiration for your own related initiatives, including the recent creation of your institute of higher education in Heidelberg.

3. The depth and the richness of our common inheritance bring us together in a friendly dialogue and mutually trustful collaboration. I rejoice that this goes forward in this land conscientiously and with determination.

Many public and private initiatives in the pastoral, academic and social fields serve this end, for example, solemn occasions such as the recent *Katholikentag* in Berlin. An encouraging sign also was the meeting of the International Liaison Committee of the Roman Catholic Church and Judaism in the past year in Regensburg.

"Jews and Christians are called, as sons of Abraham, to be a blessing for the world."

In all this it is not only a question of correcting a false religious view of the Jewish people, which caused in part the misunderstandings and persecution in the course of history, but above all a question of the dialogue between the two religions which — with Islam — can give to the world the belief in one ineffable God who speaks to us and which, representing the entire world, wish to serve him.

"The first dimension of this dialogue, that is the meeting between the people of God of the old covenant never retracted by God" (Rom. 11:29), on the one hand, and the people of the new covenant, on the other, is at the same time a dialogue within our own church, so to speak, a dialogue between the first and the second part of its Bible.

On this the "Directory for the Execution of the Conciliar Decree *Nostra Aetate*" states: "An effort will be made to acquire a better understanding of whatever in the Old Testament retains its own perpetual values . . . since that has not been cancelled by the later interpretation of the New Testament. Rather, the New Testament brings out the full meaning of the Old, while both Old and New illumine and explain each other" (II).

A second dimension of our dialogue — the real, central consideration — is the encounter between today's Christian churches and today's people of the covenant concluded with Moses. The postconciliar directive mentioned tells us how important it is that Christians tend to understand better the fundamental components of the religious tradition of Judaism and that they learn what fundamental lines are essential for the lived religious reality of Jews, according to their own understanding of it (Introduction).

The road to this reciprocal learning process is dialogue. I thank you, respected brothers, that you too lead the dialogue with that "opening and largeness of the spirit," with that "rhythm" and that prudence which were recommended to us Catholics by the abovementioned directives.

One result of this dialogue, and a sign pointing to its fruitful continuance, is the declaration of the German bishops already cited, "On the Relations of the Church to Judaism," of this past April. It is my earnest wish that this declaration become the spiritual property of all the Catholics of Germany.

I would like also to mention briefly a third dimension of our dialogue. The German bishops devote the concluding chapter of their declaration to the tasks that we have in common. Jews and Christians are called, as sons of Abraham, to be a blessing for the world (Gn. 12:2). They engage themselves jointly to work for peace and justice among all men and people and in the fullness and profundity that God himself has disposed for us and with readiness for the sacrifices that this high goal may impose upon us. "The more this holy duty inspires our encounter, so much the more will it become for us a blessing."

(continued on page 28)

a slice of summer in winter

THE MARIAPOLIS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

"For me the Mariapolis has meant a new life. I felt that I was dead, and now I am alive! I had forgotten that God loves sinners as well . . . I was really far away from him, but he reached out to me, and I felt all of his love." This was one of the innumerable testimonies gathered in many locations, in many countries, where the Mariapolises were held this past summer. Many factors contributed to the profound spiritual renewal that these meetings inspired in many people: above all the main talks written by Chiara Lubich; the experiences of life shared there; the reciprocal love that the participants sought to live day by day. And yet it is not possible to explain the effects of these summer gatherings, sponsored by the Focolare Movement, by looking simply at the efforts of the participants. Something else was involved, something which has an immense value — the presence of Jesus that he promised to those who are united in his name. When reciprocal love is profound and sincere, this presence becomes light for all.

It is relatively easy to say what happens at a Mariapolis. The program is intense and varied. There are talks and films on the theme, this year taken from the book by Chiara Lubich, "When Our Love is Charity." The focal point is the daily celebration of the Eucharist. Some time is spent in the evenings in small sharing groups which are kept small for the purpose of giving everyone the opportunity to speak and relate their experiences of the day. A sentence from the New Testament is chosen as the guideline for each day. The desire of all is to make of that week a profound experience of unity, despite the differences in age, mentality, profession and so on.

But all this says actually very little because the Mariapolis is something much more, because of the spiritual presence of Jesus among those who strive to live mutual love. His presence transforms the current human logic into the divine logic of love, changing peoples' way of thinking completely, making them discover as evident and simple, the very thing that may have seemed impossible for someone immersed in a society where the mentality of the jungle dominates — that is, the possibility of living Christianity authentically.

And yet the Mariapolis is not a dream. It is a reality, that can be the starting point for a new way of life. Afterwards, all return to the same environments where they lived before, but they return with a different spirit. They return home with the desire to carry forth the spirit of unity they have experienced.

The first Mariapolis, so to say, took place 31 years ago at Tonadico, in the Dolomite Mountains, Italy. Several focolarine gathered together with Chiara Lubich in a small Alpine cottage to rest. The intense experience of mutual love that they lived that summer was to become the first seed of what we now know as the Mariapolis.

Anyone can experience it. All that is required is that we leave our limited way of reasoning behind and enter into the new mentality of the gospel. The truth is, in fact, that if we want to understand the Mariapolis, we must "live" it.

During the past summer, more than 80,000 people particpated in the Mariapolises held in different countries. On the following pages we have some impressions of people who participated in them all over the world. **Guglielmo Boselli**

In several of the 14 Mariapolises held in Brazil, the free time after lunch each day was spent in concrete activities aimed at helping those who live in the "baraccas" (slum areas).

DIRECTLY FROM . . . .

BOLIVIA: A group of Aymara Indians at the Mariapolis in Cochabamba. Also in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and other Spanish speaking countries of Latin America, numerous Mariapolises took place.

. . . Acireale (Sicily)

"My name is Turi and I am a teacher. I'm just saying this to explain the way I am. Perhaps it's an occupational hazard or else it may be part of my personality, but I always tend to analyze. I guess you could say that I'm a "why" person; I have always asked myself why about everything, and tried to solve the prolems that I meet rationally.

"Two years ago when I met the Focolare Movement I began to attend their meetings for the purpose of finding a solution to all my personal and family problems, but I didn't seem to find any answers. However, I did experience a sense of peace, serenity and tranquility, that drew me back the following time. Then I heard many of these people speak of the Mariapolis. Since I am one of those who likes to experience things first-hand, I wanted to see for myself. And so I decided to go.

"I came and I started waiting patiently to find 'the' answer that I was seeking for my life. But nothing happened. In fact, the Mariapolis itself, what it actually is, remained vague and unclear to me. Then Thursday evening during the group meeting, I began to harass our group leader with questions, asking him an infinity of details about the Movement: how it presents itself, what activities it has, what kind of publicity it uses, etc. At a certain point, the poor fellow said to me, 'Listen, I'll tell you all I can, but more than this, in one evening, I cannot do . . .' And so there I was with a list of unanswered questions.

"The following morning I continued to brood over these things. Then, talking with some friends, I don't know how it happened, I heard myself saying, 'Perhaps I won't find a solution. I can't understand what the Mariapolis is because I came here to find answers, not to make my contribution. I'm like a pan put on the stove, ready to collect everything, but not willing to pass anything on to the plate. Instead I have to turn the pan over in such a way that everything placed there will also slide off. In other words, I have to start giving of myself and stop worrying about just receiving.

"This happened at eleven o'clock in the morning. After listening to the experiences in the auditorium, I attended Mass. I'm not sure if there was a special atmosphere at that moment, or if I was influenced by what I had understood earlier, but the fact was that I assisted at Mass in a much deeper way than I usually do. And when we left, I was happy. It was not really a discovery, because deep down I had always known that my intention for coming to the Mariapolis had been wrong. I had wanted a precise, comprehensive reply, ready-made in a package; and instead, the first thing I had to do was to make myself open to receive the love of God, and as a consequence, begin to love God and those around me.

"I hope to be able to continue to do this; I want to give God the first place in my life. I think I have understood that this is the meaning of the Mariapolis. There is something else, too. When I arrived I was nervous, anxious, and restless. Since Friday I have been serene and calm. That peace which I envied in the others and which struck me so much when I first came to the meetings, is now, I believe, a part of me."

Turi, a teacher

. . . Bogota (Colombia)

"The situation in my family especially with my husband, was a disaster! I was reaching the point of despair. I had always dreamt of having a happy family, and not having one had made me very bitter.

"One day I decided to speak to a priest. I told him that I wanted to go away, anywhere, because I couldn't return home where I felt terribly alone. The priest suggested that I go to Bogota to the Mariapolis. I didn't have the slightest idea what that was, but deep in my heart I prayed, 'Lord, if you want to, you can take care of me.' As I left home, I said to my children, 'Pray that I do not return.' In fact, I was so confused and upset that I didn't know what to do.

"Then I spent these days at the Mariapolis. I have begun to hope again. I phoned my children from here and told them that I will be coming home, and that I'm coming with a new joy and freedom. I have the impression that Jesus has entered my life and I feel that he is waiting for me there in my family. Before I didn't want to live. Now I want so much to live because there is so much I want to do."

Adelaide, a housewife

. . . Prati Di Tivo (Italy)

"My name is Joan. I am married and have two children. I attended my first Mariapolis fifteen years ago at Assisi. The people I met there, and their sincere desire to live as authentic Christians, fascinated me at once. I wanted to imitate them. In those days spent together, however, I understood clearly what I had to do: to love everyone, always; to start right away, without expecting anything in return. Intuitively I knew that at the basis of the life found at the Mariapolis, behind the serene and happy faces that I saw there, there was a precise choice that afterwards had to be put into practice in everyday life.

"So I too returned home and began this new experience, failing and starting again many times. It was fairly easy for me to communicate with others, but I felt that the major challenge was within my family because my place was there. I could not hope to do great things without first training myself in the daily exercise of being more available, more attentive to the needs of those who were near me.

"To begin with there was my mother-in-law . . . My relationship with her was very tense, I felt misunderstood, unloved, almost exploited. Our conversations were empty and cold. And yet at the Mariapolis I had heard that the important thing was to 'be the first to love.' Returning home, I wanted to take the first step with my mother-in-law, by changing at least my inner attitude toward her. The rest followed, first in little things, an act of kindness, help that was needed, an unkind word left unsaid, or a smile. A genuine relationship between us began, as between mother and daughter. My rapport with my husband, which had suffered because of the tension between my mother-in-law and me, improved as well. It has certainly not been easy to follow this way of life because my limitations seem to crop up at every moment, but each time I try to open myself to God who gives me strength to start anew.

"In fact, with time, exercising myself constantly in this gymnastics of love for others, I feel my rapport with God improve and grow stronger. I have the impression that, with the passing of years, he wants to 'trust' me; he keeps asking more of me and I, I don't know how, want to reply with a 'yes' that each time becomes deeper. And the more I give God my time, my capacities, the more he fills me with himself and makes me capable of creating 'new' relationships with others. I have the impression that I no longer express only myself, but within me a richer personality is maturing that is nourished constantly by an inner presence of Jesus.

"I experienced this above all in two difficult moments in my life. Once. when my father became ill, I found myself in the position of having to find a new relationship with him, so much so that I almost felt like a mother to him. I tried to prepare him day after day, as a mother would, for his meeting with God. The same thing was true

BERGAMO, ITALY: Going from the meeting hall to dinner is often a moment to share impressions of the day.

IVORY COAST, AFRICA: To the left, we see several participants in the Mariapolis at Man, one of the many held in Africa.

WHAT THE MARIAPOLIS WAS FOR ME . . . . .

A young woman wrote: "I had left the convent intending to marry a man with whom I had been in love for three years. Now as the Mariapolis is ending I don't know what has happened inside of me. Everything has changed. I am choosing religious life again, this time out of love. I thought I was sure of what I was doing . . . God has intervened in my life. Please print this with the experiences of the others. I am ashamed, but it is good to know the extremes of our own weakness and also the immense love of the Lord."

A Teacher

"I do not believe in God, but I like what the Mariapolis proposes and I want to live like that."

A young woman from Switzerland

"Life at the Mariapolis has a great attraction because adults and children, rich and poor, single people and families, all live together as one large family. It is amazing! Something I did not find anywhere else."

A woman of the Reformed Church

"I want to begin to live."

A woman, 84 years old

"We had already decided to get a divorce when my sister invited us to the Mariapolis. The atmosphere here touched us deeply; (later we discovered that it was mutual love which circulated among those who took part in the Mariapolis). It made us see what a mistake we were about to make. Together in the chapel, before Jesus in the Eucharist, we told one another that we were sorry for what had happened in the past and then went to confession for the first time in many years. During the following days we tried to practice charity in order to reconcile ourselves fully with one another and to grow in a true relationship of love."

A Brazilian couple

"I was surprised to find myself able to smile after so many years; I experienced real freedom."

A young student

"I think that the Lord has given me a message during this Mariapolis: 'Leave everything and follow me.' At first I said no,to this call. But he patiently persisted until I finally said, 'Do with me as you wish, I am ready to leave everything.'"

A young man from Terni

"At home I never used to obey my mother and whenever she asked me to do something, I pretended not to hear her. But here at the Mariapolis I understood that it is necessary to love everyone and I have begun to obey my mother."

Manuel, 6 years old

"I never thought that such a beautiful thing existed. A movement that brings us all to unity."

A Baptist minister from Holland

"For me the meeting was a bit difficult at first because I can't, or perhaps don't want to accept God. Or maybe I just don't know him. However, one thing I do know now — that if I love everyone, I will certainly come to meet God."

A girl from Switzerland, 18 years old

"I have never had such a strong feeling of the divine as in these days."

Director of the Protestant community that hosted the Mariapolis in Holland

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when my eldest daughter began to have heart trouble and had to be operated on for this. I faced the situation with a serenity that I never imagined possible, because within me I had taken the step to be ready to give her back to God. Through the presence of a group of people of the Movement in the city where my daughter had her surgery, I experienced a solidarity similar to the one lived at the Mariapolis. In the end, the operation was successful, but those difficult moments will remain as the most important, perhaps the most sacred, of my life.

"In addition to this, I've changed my way of thinking about many things. For example, I have understood that loving concretely means giving up a certain sum of money I can spare every month, in order to give to those in need. I have understood that I must take more care of my own health which is a gift from God, at the same time accepting every suffering that may come. I have understood that I should pay more attention to the way I dress so that this aspect of my life can be a gift for the others; that I must learn more, especially in regard to religion, to strengthen my relationship with God.

"Every Mariapolis, in this way, has been a step that has encouraged me to go ahead. Slowly this way of life has also attracted my daughters, and then my husband as well. Now I can say that we are truly a united family, and we have the joy of living the experience of the gospel together.

"Today, therefore, fifteen years after my first Mariapolis, I seem to rediscover that it is true that everything in our life can change when we love. For me it has been like that. I want to go ahead in this way together with all of you."

Joan, a mother

. . . Rieti (Italy)

"I must say that I came almost by chance. At home everyone was going away, some to the shore and others to the mountains. I was going to be left alone and so I decided to come along with some friends who were planning to participate in the Mariapolis. I confess that I came with the desire of doing little or nothing. In fact they told me that everyone at the camp does his share of the work,

but I thought to myself, 'I'll make believe I'm sick, I'll go away to do something else . . .' Two or three of my friends felt the same way and we planned to stick together.

"The first day we appeared only for lunch, supper and when it was time to go to bed. The rest of the time, we toured around the area in the car.

"Finally, one day, two young men approached us. We had already met them at our arrival. In fact, I had been struck by their warm welcome and for a moment I had thought it would have been nice to get to know them better. Now they told us. Fellows, since you are here, how about trying to live the Mariapolis with the others? Why don't you look around and see if you can help?'

"It was funny what happened to me at that point. On one hand I wanted to disregard their words, but on the other hand I had a strange desire to do something about it! There was a part of me which did want to be kind to others, to do something more than just have fun. It was quite a struggle but in the end I decided to try and do something to actively participate in what was going on. I offered myself voluntarily for any work at all. In the kitchen they needed two boys to wash the dishes, so I went with my friend, Luke. I won't go into too many details but I can tell you that it was quite an experience for both of us.

"It made us want to go to the auditorium to hear the experiences of the others and see how they handled certain situations. I found everything extremely interesting. Now I wanted to know who the gen were and what they did. Why? How was it possible to be one of them? I wanted to start living like them.

"I think that next year you'll see me here again . . . but I am planning to start off on the right foot."

John, a student

"I had gone through a whole series of really negative experiences. I had lost faith in everything. The possibility of building authentic relationships with others seemed to be a dream. I could see that the consumer mentality puts everything on a materialistic level; we're never satisfied with what we have. In the hospital where I stayed for rehabilitation from drugs, I met a doctor who made an impression on me because of the way he acted and took care of me. I asked myself why this person was doing all this just for me. I had travelled around the world always searching for 'something,' but had found nothing. He invited me to come here and take part in this new experience.

"So I found myself at the Mariapolis. The first day when I heard them speak of love I was very suspicious. But as time went on, I began to realize that they were serious and besides that they were happy! It was as if the light inside of me was returning. Deep inside me I felt that the will to live, to do, to give, to love returned. This whole experience has been very positive, it is an experience that one should have. From today on everything in my life is going to change, I think that says what the Mariapolis can mean and what it can give, thinking also of the many young people who have gone through the same things that I have."

Mark, 27 years old

ANGERS, FRANCE: A few families during a break. The presence of many families was one of the characteristics of the 1980 Mariapolises.

. . . Curitiba (Brazil)

"I am a farmer. I was invited to the Mariapolis, not knowing what was in store for me. When I arrived the first night, there were so many problems finding my room that I decided to leave right away. I had always had things my way in life, peacefully if possible, or using violence if necessary. Here they were speaking of a way of life that appeared to me as quite uncomfortable. Yet, I stayed day after day. I enjoyed the atmosphere, everybody's kindness, the talks in the morning, all about love, charity. For the first time in my life, I experienced an 'inner revolution' which gently compelled me, after 28 years, to reconcile myself with God. Returning to my farm, after the Mariapolis, I have decided to continue this new life with determination."

A Brazilian farmer

THE 1981 MARIAPOLIS IN NORTH AMERICA

This year there will be four Mariapolises in North America: one in New Mexico, one in Washington State, one in Wisconsin and one in upstate New York. You will find the dates and details in the next issue of Living City.

WORD OF LIFE

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

The word guarantees happiness.

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

The word draws us to our specific vocations.

The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.

The word makes us see the truth.

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

The word preserves us from human concerns.

The word obtains everything.

The word brings about union with God.

The word gives us hope of eternal life.

The word makes us one.

The word changes one's mentality.

The word makes each soul a heaven.

"The members are many, but the body is one." (1 Cor. 12:20)

"The members are many, but the body is one" (1 Cor. 12:20).

Have you ever visited a community that is alive because it is made up of authentic Christians?

Have you ever attended some of the people's gatherings? Or have you tried to understand their way of life?

If so, you must have noticed that the people who make up this community have different roles: some have a gift for speaking, and can communicate spiritual realities that touch your soul. Others have a gift for helping, or caring for the sick, or providing aid, and it is amazing how much they can do for the benefit of those who suffer. Some teach with such wisdom that new strength is added to the faith which you already possessed. There are those who know the art of organizing, or of governing, while others have a gift for understanding those around them, and for offering consolation to those in need.

Yes, you may have noticed all of these things, but what strikes you above all in a community of this type is the fact that all of the members have the same spirit, something you seem to feel in the air, and unites this particular community into one, single body.

"The members are many, but the body is one."

Paul too, in a particular way, found himself before vital Christian communities which had actually come into being through the power of his extraordinary preaching.

One of these was the young community of Corinth to which the Holy Spirit had been very generous in conferring gifts, or charisms, as they are called. Moreover, in those days there were extraordinary charisms given for the special vocation of the early Church.

The only thing was that this community, after the exalting experience of numerous gifts from the Holy Spirit, began to encounter rivalry and confusion among those who had received such benefits. Therefore it was necessary to ask for help from Paul who was at Ephesus.

Paul was quick to reply through one of his remarkable letters, explaining how those special graces should be used.

He explained that there is a variety of charisms, and functions, like that of the apostles, or the prophets, or teachers, but there is only one Lord who bestows them all. He said that in the community there are those who work miracles, or heal, while others have special gifts for serving or for governing. There are those who can speak in tongues, and those who can interpret them. But, he adds, there is only one God in whom all these gifts have their origin.

Therefore, since these various gifts are expressions of the one and the same Holy Spirit that is freely given to each one of them, they will always be in harmony with one another, always complementary. They do not serve personal satisfaction, nor can they be a motive of pride or of personal affirmation, but they have been given for a common purpose: to build the community. Their goal is service and therefore they cannot cause rivalry or confusion.

Paul, even though he was thinking of the special gifts that concerned the life of the community as a whole, was still of the opinion that all the members possessed their own talent, their own special ability which should be utilized for the good of all. Everyone should be happy with what he or she has been given.

He envisioned the community as a body and asked himself, "If your whole body were just one eye, how would you hear any-

thing? And if it were just one ear, how would you smell anything? Instead, of that, God has put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is,

"The members are many, but the body is one."

If we are all different, each one of us can be a gift for the others. Therefore we can be ourselves and fulfill the plan that God has for us in relation to the others.

In the community in which this variety of gifts is truly put into practice, Paul finds a reality to which he gives the splendid name, Christ. The fact is that this original body, made up of members of the community, is truly the Body of Christ. Christ in fact, continues to live in his Church and the Church is his body. Through baptism in fact the Holy Spirit incorporates the believer in Christ, and he or she becomes a part of the community. There, all are Christ, every division is eliminated, every discrimination is overcome.

"The members are many, but the body is one."

Since the body is one, then the members of the Christian community can bring to fulfillment the new way of life, by accomplishing unity among themselves, a unity that presupposes diversity and pluralism. The community does not resemble a block of inert matter, but a living organism with different members

To provoke division is, for Christians, to do the opposite of what they should do.

"The members are many, but the body is one."

How then can you live this new word that the Scripture proposes?

You should have great respect for the different functions, gifts and talents of the Christian community.

You need to be open to the entire Church in all its aspects, not only to the particular community which is known to you, or you belong to, like the parish community, or the religious organization or movement you are a member of. You must be open to the universal Church in all her manifold expressions.

There are Christians who, through their particular vocation illustrate for you the value of the Christian virtues such as obedience, poverty, chastity, humility or fortitude. . . . Others will show you with their lives that what matters is love for the poor, the alienated, the 'least'. . . . Some show you the importance of union with God, while others stress the necessity of bringing back to God those who are far away from him. Some are outstanding in the Church for their ecumenical work, contributing toward the unity of the Church, and others for their contribution to missionary work. You find some who dedicate themselves with particular care to study and to the spreading of Christian truths; some, who with the Pope and the Bishops, apostles of today, govern, teach and guide Christians. . . . You find more recent gifts, the charisms of this century, that astonish you and make you praise God, because through them, you realize that he is ever present. In the same way it is not difficult to know communities of men and women enlightened by charisms that have existed for centuries and are still so vital.

You should value all of these and do your part so that they may be useful to the Church in the best possible way.

And if you are not personally involved in any of these special tasks, do not be scornful of what God is asking of you right where you are. Even though your daily work may seem monotonous and lacking in significance, we all belong to the same body. As members, each one of us participates in the activities of the entire body, even though we remain in the place that God has chosen for us.

The essential, then, is that you possess that charism which, as Paul proclaims, surpasses all others; and that is love, love for each one you meet, love for everyone on earth.

It is through love, through mutual love that many members can be one body.

CHIARA LUBICH

EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Gospel.

A SLOW CHANGE

During the past year there have been some very difficult and tense moments at the office. My supervisor had made life very difficult for me. She often spoke to me in a rude tone of voice, she humiliated me and she criticized me to my superiors. I felt her behavior was unjustified and I was very hurt. However, I knew that my main responsibility was to love her and to be the first to love. After an altercation I would make an effort to speak to her first, and I tried to look at her every day with new eyes. It wasn't always easy and I asked God to give me the grace to love her. I tried to remain calm whenever she was upset and I offered my suffering to Jesus. I hoped the situation would be resolved not so much for my sake but for the greater glory of God.

Slowly she began to change. She became friendlier and more attentive. A few weeks ago she told me that she had recommended me for a better position which became available. I was amazed! A year of loving Jesus in her had produced fruits I could have never imagined.

D.W.

A SURPRISING IMPACT

Sometimes — maybe I should say often — we get surprising results from trying to love.

Early in the school year, when I was teaching a class for the second or third time, one of my students responded to a question I raised with a rather foolish and long-winded answer. Since I saw that the rest of the class was getting very restless and some were on the verge of laughing at him, I felt I had to love him in a special way by listening as seriously and as intently as I could to his words. I was able to find something positive in what the student was saying and as soon as I could I cut in and tried to build on that so I could save him the embarrassment of being laughed at. And it worked.

After class another student walked with me out of the room and down the hall; he asked whether I had ever met someone who reminded me of someone else that I did not like and whether this led me to dislike the second person as much as the first. I said, yes, I felt this temptation to be prejudiced, just as all people do. He then confessed that he felt that way about me when he first came into the class because I looked like another teacher who was hated by the students since he always humiliated them. But he realized little by little during the first two classes that although we looked alike, I was really not like that hated teacher. Moreover, after today's class he said he learned that his response to me, and to many other things as well, was too cynical. He felt he had to change his way of looking at life.

This was a real hundredfold for me: by loving one student I had a surprising impact on another.

T.H.

A CALM DISCUSSION

Even though I had read the word of life, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:24), at the beginning of the month, it just didn't seem to come to my mind too often. One day, however, while we were on vacation in Wisconsin, visiting our relatives, my husband took our new car and let our young sons drive it from one relative's farm to another, through uncultivated fields, that had many holes, hills and low hanging branches.

Looking our the window, I watched all that was happening. I was picturing the muffler falling off and the car becoming all scratched up. These thoughts made me very angry and I went outside and sat on the steps to wait for my husband so that I could really tell him how I felt.

Then I remembered what I had read in the word of life. We cannot let our hearts be taken by the goods of the earth. We cannot let what we possess, possess us. Our hearts must be kept free and completely open to God. These words helped me to calm down. In fact, I began to enjoy watching the boys having so much fun with their father. I realized that this togetherness means more that a few scratches on the car.

They returned all happy and smiling. Later, when I was able to speak to my husband about my feelings, I did it very calmly and he responded similarly, saying that it had not been the wisest thing to do. What could have been a heated argument, turned into a calm discussion by my trying to live the word of life.

L.K.

SERVING THE OTHERS

At work we have a word processing machine and I was asked to take a course to learn how to operate it. Later I found out that the machine was in the office on a trial basis and that at the end of 90 days they would decide if they were going to keep it or not. I felt badly because I had worked very hard to learn how to handle the machine, and no one considered what I had been through. But I remembered the word of life, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."(Lk.18:14). To be humble meant to serve others and it helped me to forget about myself. I realized I was attached in some ways to that machine and I made the step to accept whatever God wanted. Then I felt free to love the others in my office.

M.C.

TAKING TIME

Each night when I put the children to bed I sit with them while they say their prayers. But before inside me I often felt very anxious to get this last task of the day over with because I was so tired. The word of life seemed to call attention to this attitude of mine, "Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them, if you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven" (Matt. 6:1). It pointed out the significance of the hidden or small tasks of our life.

After that I tried to spend more time with each child as they prayed and I overcame my tiredness for just a little longer. Also we started an examination of conscience which drew out things that were on each child's mind, but in the busyness of the day they didn't talk about. So our unity deepened from this small act of love.

P.H.

A SMALL ACT OF LOVE

I have a friend who is ill and whom I used to visit regularly. For a while I was unable to visit her as often as I used to. I noticed whenever I called her that she was distant and rather cool. I began to get annoyed and I thought to myself, "O.K., if that's the way you want it I'll stop visiting you." I realized however that she might have been hurt about something and it was the very time to go that extra mile. I called her and invited her and her family to dinner. I prepared the best meal I could, making two deserts in order to love them. I was not sure how the evening would turn out but I was ready to do my part. When they arrived they had a basket of apples for us. During dinner my friend seemed happy and relaxed. They shared with us a great suffering which had come into their lives a few weeks before. A few days later she phoned me. She was her usual self. What could have been a broken friendship was prevented by a small act of love.

B.F.

SPECIAL:

THE INAUGURATION OF A SCHOOL

On October 15, 1980 a school of the Focolare Movement was inaugurated at Rocca di Papa near Rome. Following are the talks given that day by Chiara Lubich, Giorgio Marchetti, Jesús Castellano Cervera, Marisa Cerini, and Giuseppe Maria Zanghi.

The Mariapolis Center at Rocca di Papa near Rome.

This past summer was a moment for the Focolare Movement to examine its life in order to see if it corresponds, in all its aspects, to the primary idea from which it was born, and to see at what point it is in carrying out its programs.

Within this context, the aspect of studies was also considered in order to see how much has already been accomplished, and what must still be clarified and completed. Up until now, the theological studies of the members of the Movement have been taken care of, for the most part, by the "Mystical Body Institute" located in Loppiano, Italy[1] and by other schools existing in other nations connected to it. Some members of the Work of Mary[2], have attended or are attending, theological universities and other institutions of higher learning in religious education in Rome or elsewhere.

As we speak of studies we should also mention the work of the Movement's Italian publishing house Citta' Nuova, with its branch offices bearing the same name in other countries all over the world (e.g. New City Press, New York, etc.) Two years ago, a new magazine "New Humanity," in Italian, has begun its publication.

However, a need was felt for further expansion in this field in order to meet the demands and goals of the Movement. First of all, it seemed necessary to have all the members complete their theological studies; secondly, it appeared important to pursue further studies connected with the goals of the Movement and the doctrine contained in its spirituality.

Consequently, an idea that had been thought of for some time was brought to fulfillment and it was decided to found the "Marian School." This decision materialized into the plan for a school which, in the beginning, would function through courses by correspondence for the members of the Movement all over the world. It would be impossible, in fact, at this time to have a large school building, or to set up a program of regular classes to be attended here. It is possible, however, to have a team of professors who already reside in Rocca di Papa and could be working out of here. The teachers will be from the "Mystical Body Institute" of Loppiano, religious, who are associated with the Movement, and who are teaching in different theological schools in Rome, priests, and focolarini and focolarine who are prepared for this task.

Chiara Lubich will follow personally the work of the school, step by step. Rev. Pasqual Foresi will direct it and Giuseppe Zanghi will be the rector. The faculty, then, will be made up of religious, priests, and lay people of different nationalities, who will teach theology, philosophy and sociology. Other subjects in the field of the humanities will be added to this curriculum in the future.

In preparing their lessons the teachers will have to keep in mind the goals of the Movement, which consist in contributing to the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer, ". . . that all may be one," and in attempting to overcome the obstacles that exist in reaching this goal. Therefore, the need was considered to study also the problems connected with contemporary atheism, as well as other phenomena of theoretical and practical secularization which are present in today's world. Since the number of people belonging to other religions and wishing to be part of the Movement is always growing, it seemed to be the moment to deepen our knowledge of the world's great religions.

Furthermore, we all know how important, I would say essential, is the testimony of unity given by Christians. For this reason the program of the school will include ecumenical studies with the purpose of contributing to the unity of all Christians.

Naturally, this school is only one aspect of the Marian School intended in the widest sense of the word. In its broader context, in fact, the Marian School, comprises all that has been studied within the Movement and all the wisdom existing in it.

In the end, it was decided to choose October 15, 1980, the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, for the "inauguration" of this school, in the presence of the leaders of the Movement gathered here from all over the world.

Giorgio Marchetti

1) A small city built by the Focolare Movement near Florence, Italy. It embodies a concrete expression of a society founded on the gospel. Its inhabitants live according to the spirituality of unity of the Focolare Movement.

2) This is the official name of the Movement, that expresses in a better way, the sources of its spirituality.

Chiara Lubich

A MARIAN SCHOOL

by CHIARA LUBICH

We are printing here the talk given by the foundress of the Focolare Movement on the occasion of the inauguration of the "Marian School."

Today is the Feast of St. Teresa of Avila, a Doctor of the Church. We chose this date for today's meeting last summer. At that time, in fact, one of the aspects of our life - that of studies - was further clarified. We felt an urgent need then to found a school of our own, one which could be used by all the focolarini,[1] and by the other members of the Movement as well. In addition, we understood more clearly some new indications regarding what this school (which we have always called a Marian school) should be.

The Feast of St. Teresa has come and we have here, the persons who are responsible for the Movement all over the world, and those focolarini and focolarine, or priests and religious, who in our Movement are dedicating, or will dedicate themselves to studying and teaching. Therefore, let us inaugurate today our school and put it under the special protection of St. Teresa of Avila.

For this school to be in conformity with God's plan for us, it might be useful at this time to review the place that studies have in our Movement — the place which God wants them to have and the Church has approved. By doing this, we will not fall short of the expectations of God and of the Church as we embark on this new enterprise.

In order to understand God's will for us in this new field, we must look back at the history of the Movement. There was an early indication of his will in 1944, at the dawn of the Movement. I felt urged from within to abandon my studies and to "put all my books in the attic." Even though the outward reason for this decision was the initial development of the Movement and its need for my undivided attention, there was also another more profound reason for it. Desirous as I was for the truth, I had understood how absurd it would be to seek it in the study of philosophy when I could find it in Jesus, the Incarnate Truth. So I gave up studying in order to possess the fullness of life by following Christ. I knew that I would find a new light in this life, because the Gospel says, that God will manifest himself to those who love him, (therefore, to those who follow him.)

That episode was a prelude to what would come about, in time, within the Movement itself. The light we found, however, was to become the soul of a way of life. And if we were to speak of a school within the Work of Mary, the day would come when the Movement (which we had seen in various ways as the Work of Mary, the family of Mary, the city of Mary, and the Kingdom of Mary) would be seen also as the "School of Mary."

After having given up my studies, or better, after making the choice I made, there was truly an abundance of light. It enlightened us about the spirituality which God wanted for us, and day after day, it molded the Movement which was developing rapidly. We called this light "wisdom," (and I think that, through the grace of God, this has been Christian wisdom, because it gave order to a Work of God which is recognized as such by the Church). And we understood that wisdom was to be the essence of our new studies, the studies for all the members of the Work of Mary.

In fact, over the years we have come to understand that all the aspects of our life contain both a factor which comes "from above," and one that comes, "from below," so to say. We can see this in our apostolate, for example. The witness which we give is, in a sense, the more divine aspect. (It is God, present in our midst, who bears witness to himself.) The organization of gatherings, of Mariapolises, temporary or permanent, etc. is in

a way the more human aspect. And what would our gatherings be without the witness we give, or if the "apostles" lacked light, and were not leaven and salt?

Thus, in a manner of speaking, the spirituality is the more divine part of our formation; the courses and places where people meet are the more human part. And what would all the meetings and the houses be without the spirituality.

The same holds true for our studies. The factor which comes "from above" is wisdom; the one which comes "from below" is the effort which we put into learning. What use could we, who have been called by God to work for his kingdom, have for a knowledge that is not enlightened by wisdom?

Wisdom! To possess wisdom!

"And how should we go about it? Many focolarini or other members of the Movement might ask themselves. How can we acquire this wisdom which the Church expects of us as the will of God?

Here I must repeat the answer which we have always given in every phase of our brief history: to possess wisdom we must live with Jesus in our midst. He is wisdom. Therefore, we must enlarge our hearts on the dimension of the whole Work of Mary; we must be in perfect unity with the Church (that is to say, with whoever represents the Church within and outside of our Movement); and we ourselves must be united with one another. Then Jesus will be with us, and with his presence, wisdom will be present.

The chapter of our Statutes which deals with studies affirms: "In order to reach the goals of the Work of Mary, the focolarini will seek to possess true Christian wisdom . . ." And then it continues (this is the part which indicates that studying is the will of God for us): " . . . accompanied not only with adequate knowledge of religion, but also with whatever secular knowledge might contribute to those goals as well."

Wisdom, therefore, together with studies; but that which we ordinarily refer to as studies has a precise purpose: to accompany wisdom.

Since knowledge can inflate one's ego and stifle the spirit, our Statutes add, "The focolarini will dedicate themselves to studies, in such a way that they do not become an impediment to the spirit of God . . . " And since well-formulated studies can be of use to the kingdom of God, it adds, "but on the contrary, they might become a useful means of loving both God and one's neighbor."

In spite of the fact that I gave up my studies in 1944, I felt it necessary in 1950, to take up my books once more in order to study theology. I felt the need to find a secure foundation on which to base the many things that we were understanding at that time. It was during that year that Father Foresi[2] expressed the desire to become a priest. And I saw in him someone who would be able to initiate our theological studies. It was at that time that our studies, seen as an accompaniment to wisdom, actually began. It was then that focolarini, focolarine, and others began to attend different theological schools.

It was through the contribution of Father Foresi and these other persons, that we established, years later, a school of higher education at Loppiano. Bearing the name of the "Mystical Body Institute," its purpose is to instruct those who are preparing themselves to enter the Focolare, and to prepare subject matter for the Volunteers, the Gen, and other members of the Movement.

From the very beginning it was understood that this wealth of studies which was to adorn wisdom would comprise two fields: secular and religious.

The times in which we live make secular studies a necessity for the focolarini and others in the Movement. Furthermore, we had to undertake these studies in depth because we wanted to imitate Jesus who was not only a priest, but also worked as a carpenter for thirty years, and he did his job perfectly.

Regarding secular formation, it was clear that the focolarini, and likewise the others had to acquire the knowledge needed in their professions and to perfect this knowledge in different ways throughout their lives.

Regarding the religious aspect, since the "Magna Charta" of the Movement is the priestly prayer of Jesus, from which the spirituality is also derived, the goal of these studies would have to be that of going deeper into the truths concerning the Mystical Body of Christ, the total Christ.

We know that the Movement has been called to contribute to the unity of the Church, torn apart by divisions throughout the centuries, and to make its beauty and unity shine forth much more, even during these times in which it has been banned in some places. Therefore it is necessary for us to have a deep knowledge of these truths regarding the Mystical Body so that also through our witness, God can offer a remedy for existing errors.

Our Statutes affirm: "The focolarini will make a special effort to learn the doctrine of the Mystical Body very well. Both in their regular programs and in the further pursuit of secular, as well as theological studies, they will put particular emphasis on everything which might contribute to better accomplishing the goals of the Work of Mary."

Aside from a thorough knowledge of catechism, this course of study should include advanced studies in religious education and the establishment of a school.

What we don't have yet is a school, or better we didn't because today we are inaugurating one.

Since the future professors of this school are present here, I think it might be useful to say something about what we have always called a "Marian School." Ever since the Movement began, we have often thought that a doctrine would emerge one day from this work of God that was coming to life. We saw it coming forth al-

"What is developing within the Work of Mary is not just a doctrine; it is a doctrine which is being incarnated in the most diverse ways of life, and these very ways of life will act as testing grounds. They themselves will become part of the school as well."

most as an act of love, just as the Father generates the Word out of love. If, in fact, a spirituality does generate life, then that life contains within itself a doctrine.

In 1955 we were already saying, "Our ideal carries within itself a doctrine . . . We present it as a life of union with God and with the others. However, a doctrine can be drawn forth from it . . ."

In a writing from 1964 which summarizes the place of studies in our life, one can find these ideas: we hope that the whole Work of Mary, through Christian wisdom accompanied by theology and secular knowledge, will be able to develop that doctrine of the Mystical Body which has Mary as its incomparable teacher. She, in fact, is the mother of the members of the Mystical Body. She is the Mother of the Church. Mary is the prototype of the "social person" because she gave life to Christ and, therefore, to his Mystical Body. For this reason, we have always referred to the doctrine of the Mystical Body, which will be elaborated by members of the Work of Mary, as a "Marian doctrine."

If we do this, we hope that as a consequence several schools will be established, schools in which this doctrine can be taught and learned. The doctrine will have to take into account the results of all the theological endeavors which have already taken place within the Church, and it must add to these our own contribution, the fruit of studies carried out with Jesus in the Midst.

One thing which it seems important to stress is that the teachers and students in this school will need to live all the virtues, especially humility, in an excellent way, so that they can learn from the various other schools, and produce — God willing — a Marian synthesis.

The active participation of members of religious communities who are spiritually bound to the Work of Mary will be a great help to this school. Through them, we will have a more dynamic contact with the children of St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius, and so on. They will tell us the thought of their own schools, and thus, by putting Jesus words about unity into practice all together, we will be better able to serve the Mystical Body of Christ today, also through doctrine.

Furthermore, we have the impression that this school will not remain solely theoretical. What is developing within the Work of Mary is not just a doctrine; it is a doctrine which is being incarnated in the most diverse ways of life, and these very ways of life will act as testing grounds. They themselves will become part of the school as well.

In order to have an in-depth understanding of the pedagogical problems linked with education, it will be necessary for us to go and see those schools in which our spirituality is now lived. Likewise, in order to study the other spiritualities well, we will have to visit the convents or monasteries where the spirit of the founder is lived and, has been ulteriorly focused on through contact with the spirituality of the Movement.

Thus the entire Work of Mary can be seen as a testing ground for this doctrine, while at the same time giving life to it.

This Marian School will not look on Mariology as just one branch of theology. Rather it will view all of theology in the light of Mary.

This is how we have seen things in the past.

What do we think of this Marian School now? Today we can see with greater clarity and certainty that the spirituality of the Movement, and the reality of the Work of Mary, contain a doctrine. It rests on two pillars which are both mysteries: Unity and Jesus Forsaken. Unity is, as Paul VI has said (and as we have always thought), the synthesis of Christ's teaching, the summary of all that he told us. Jesus Forsaken is (as the saints and theologians confirm) the culmination of Christ's passion and, therefore, in a certain sense, almost a synthesis of his sufferings.

We are certain of something else as well. It is true that our spirituality encompasses the possibility of gathering together in deep unity persons who have already been called by God to follow dif-

ferent paths. This shows that the doctrine of unity and Jesus Forsaken not only does not conflict with the others already existing within the Church, but is perhaps called to accomplish a particular synthesis with them, one which I would like to call a Marian synthesis.

Further evidence of the fact that we are moving towards the development of a new doctrine lies in the fact that there are among us those who, like Father Foresi, have felt called to dedicate themselves to an in-depth study of the charism which God has given to the Movement. They have already undertaken this work.

But today St. Teresa (and I say this without wanting to make any comparisons) gives us a great consolation. She is a Doctor of the Church not because of how much has been studied about her, but as a result of her own spiritual experience which was fully hers and fully of the Church. Her doctrine lies in the understandings she had and in the inspirations that God gave her.

Our doctrine, therefore, already exists in all the aspects of the Work of Mary which came from God. All that remains to do is to document it and elaborate it. And this will come about. It will come about if we do not study on our own, or isolated from one another; but only if our every effort is verified by Jesus among us. He is our "Doctor," he who can live between a Franciscan and a Jesuit, between a Dominican and a Benedictine, among all of them and the focolarini. And if he can live among them he can also enlighten them.

We want to declare to him now with all our heart that he and he alone will be our Teacher, presiding over the Marian School, with Mary at his side. ●

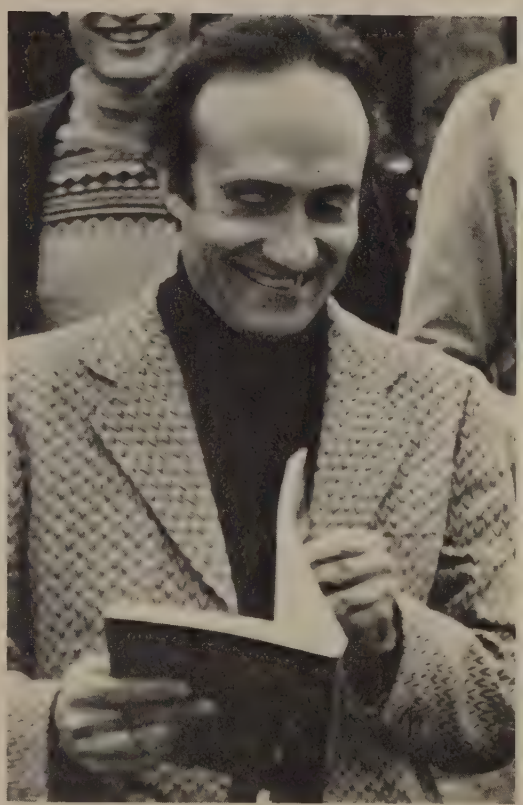
1) Men and women, single and married, who have totally consecrated their lives in the Focolare Movement to realize Christ's last prayer, ". . . that all may be one."

2) Father Pasquale Foresi was the first focolarino to be ordained a priest in 1954.

The program of this school

by GIUSEPPE MARIA ZANGHI

Following Chiara's talk, the rector of the school outlined the curriculum that is being prepared.



Giuseppe Maria Zanghì, the rector of the new school of the Focolare Movement.

In proposing the curriculum that we have drawn up for the "Marian" School (that will consist in courses by correspondence at least in the beginning), I wish to make a premise which I feel is essential. We are going into a field in which many great theologians and saints have worked in the history of the Church. It is enough to think of St. Thomas, St. Augustine, St. Bonaventure, saints who have had truly authentic charisms regarding studies and the development of theology. It is enough to think of the great mystics, such as St. Teresa of Avila, and St. John of the Cross, who in their own way, have given a profound contribution to theology.

We are therefore moving into an area where it is necessary to tread cautiously.

The purpose of our studies is then to love God with our intelligence, in order to achieve this aim: I want to get to know this Person whom I love above all things. There are many who have searched for the "Loved One" in this way, even outside of Christianity. The love that certain Indian, Moslem and Jewish scholars have for God is extraordinary. Therefore it is necessary to study these saints, these mystics, these scholars, with great humility; a humility with a capital "H."

This humility is required of us moreover when we study the Christian ideal that has been proposed to us in our Movement. In fact, we are dealing with a charism. By charism is meant a very particular presence of God in the spirit of a person, which is for the Church and for humanity today. Therefore, when we speak of a charism, we speak of something which has to do with God. It be-

comes therefore spontaneous to make an examination of conscience. To what extent do we live this charism, which, in our case, God has entrusted to the foundress of our Movement, Chiara Lubich, and in which God in his mercy wants us to participate inasmuch as we live it? To what extent have we understood it? I am not talking about the comprehension of things that our intelligence can give us, which can be more or less brilliant and assisted by God's grace. No, here we are dealing with the understanding of a charism in its very essence. And only God can help us do that.

In reality, this charism already contains a doctrine. The spirituality that has been given to us is indeed a doctrine. Our task, so to say, is to now draw forth a theological and philosophical doctrine, but keeping in mind that the charism is greater than any doctrine. Theology doesn't add anything substantial to the charism of a spirituality. If anything, it makes it more accessible, becoming like an "inclined plane." The fact remains, however, that if the work of theologians is authentic, at one point, they have to leave their theology and put those who have followed them step by step in the theological ascent, before life, the spirituality, and the charism. This will tell them things which no theology could ever reveal to them, even if it had been elaborated by saints. This is so because theology has its intrinsic limits; it is an exercise in discursive and rational knowledge. Wisdom, instead, by definition, transcends this discursive and rational learning.

Anyone setting out to be a theologian should remember all this. In one of the greatest theological books that exist, "The Itinerary of the Mind to God," St. Bonaventure guides man towards God, but then at a certain point he says, "Now, if you would like to know more, do not pursue studies anymore, but pursue Love, pursue prayer."

In order to develop a theology based on the spiritual doctrine which we have received, it is necessary therefore, to have either a charism, such as those given to founders, or unity in Jesus, that is, the presence of Jesus in the midst of those who study. Those of us who will teach in the Marian School will begin this task feeling that we are temporary and simple instruments in the hands of God, useless and unfit, whom he can re-

ST. TERESA OF AVILA
the evangelical charism of prayer

October 15th was the feast day of St. Teresa of Avila, chosen as the patron saint of the Marian School. The homily of the Mass had been prepared by a Carmelite priest, Jesús Castellano Cervera. He dedicated it to "the saint of prayer." We are printing here a few passages of this homily.

Father Jesús Castellano Cervera

"The Lord gave St. Teresa the Great," Chiara Lubich once wrote, "the gift of prayer not only for herself, but for all of us."[1] I attempted therefore to find in the gospel the "the word of life" of St. Teresa, that is, a sentence that world express the aspect of the life of Jesus that she summarized in her life for the entire Church.

It was easy for me to understand that this sentence was the advice which Jesus gave regarding prayer — to be alone, in a private place, where the Father listens to us (see Mt. 6:6). According to Teresa, ". . . prayer is nothing else in my opinion but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with him who we know, loves us."[2] I had the impression that with these words St. Teresa was explaining what was Jesus' prayer - a relationship of love, done in solitude and often, as the evangelists stress. His prayer was a dialogue of love with the One who he knew loved him, the Father.

This helped me to discover, for the first time, the evangelical source of Teresa's charism for the Church and see it as a living explanation of the aspect of Jesus' life concerning silent, prolonged, frequent prayer, through which the Father filled Jesus with his love so that he could welcome and fulfill his will.

Chiara once made the following observation: all the words of the gospel are "love" if we look at their roots. To pray means to live in friendship with God, to give our response to the One who is always the first to love us (". . . with him who we know loves us"). St. Teresa prayed because she "believed in love" (1Jn. 4:16).

After I realized this, it seemed that I understood even better the succession of events in the life of St. Teresa and her mission in the

place when he likes. It is his work that must be done.

The main thing which we will try to do before anything else therefore will be to have Jesus in our midst — first of all, with the person who has communicated to us the charism of our spirituality, and then with those who will study with us — so that this reality will be constantly with us in our work.

It was necessary to say all this, in order to understand the criteria for the curriculum which we have drawn up for the school. In fact, it could have been prepared in two ways. One way would be to have many different courses, i.e., in dogmatic theology, in the history of the Church, in philosophy, etc., each with a professor specializing in that subject. But there is another way, which we have chosen, that seems to correspond better to what I have said up to now. It makes it easier to work together with "Jesus in the midst." The

The method of setting up different courses for the different disciplenes, preparing sort of treatises for each one seems less suited; in fact someone who does dogmatic theology (or any other treatise) is inclined to dedicate himself to work alone as an individual, seeking to question the spirituality within himself. This is not enough.

One must find the way to share continually one's research, understandings, and the studies made; to let go of his achievement, and to find it again in unity "with Jesus in the midst." To do this, a type of work which demands working together is needed.

This is why then we have chosen the system according to "topics." I'll give you an example. We would approach the topic "God," which by itself would be frightening because of its immensity, from vari-

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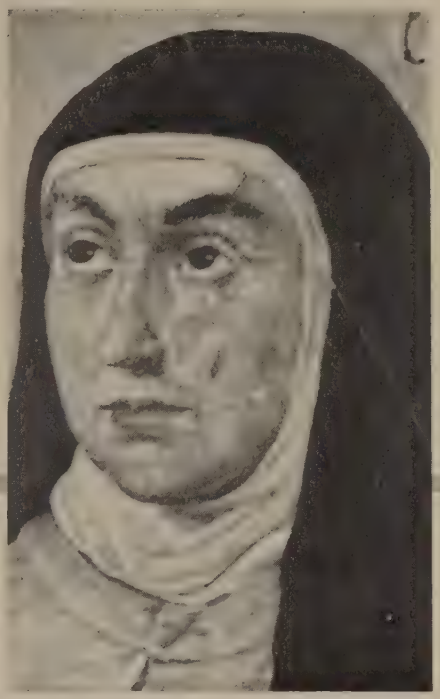

Saint Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church, on whose feast day the Marian School was inaugurated. The picture is a detail of a painting of the saint from the 18th century.

Church, which I saw next to the missions of all the other saints, and in the special situation of the Church of her time. Through prayer, Teresa lived the entire gospel. Her prayer-life was the synthesis of her relationship with God and with the others. Teresa called Christ "the Master who teaches me everything," and the "living Book"[3] through which she learned everything. Through prayer, he led her to experience living wisdom, that we can define with St. Paul as ". . . the breadth and the length, the height and the depth . . . " of the love of God (Eph. 3:18).

Through prayer her heart was enlarged until it embraced the Church of her time. Through prayer, she went along the entire way to sanctity — from the moment of her conversion, up to the point of the mystical experience of the Trinity dwelling in her soul. She indicated Christian life as a way to follow, a castle to discover, reaching in the end the Trinity where ". . . our image is engraved . . . "[4]

Through prayer, God revealed to St. Teresa the wonders of the interior life; that within every individual there is a place which is the temple of the Lord, a dwelling place for his glory, which leads us to first search for God within us, but later to search for ourselves in God. This concept can be seen in the well-known Teresian formula. "Search for me within yourself; search for yourself in Me."[5] Finally, through prayer, God showed Teresa the wonders of his love; she was brought to the heights of the experience of heaven on earth. She was like an "astronaut of the Spirit," as Pope Paul VI defined the mystics, and was drawn into God's orbit. There she contemplated his plans for salvation and she understood "from God" the meaning of human existence.

Prayer-life was therefore the evangelical way of St. Teresa of Avila, One prays in order to know and to love God and to do his will. As St. Teresa used to say, the will of God lies in love for the others, service to the Church and love for the crucified Jesus. We should love him to the point of identifying ourselves with him in order to be ". . . real spiritual persons . . . " and to be ". . . branded with his sign, which is the sign of the Cross."[6]

Teresa of Avila teaches us to seek the sources of God's wisdom first of all in Christ, the "living Book," and only Master. However, she also said that we can find them by observing attentively the things of this earth, through people and events, that are one way that God uses to speak to us.

The wisdom that St. Teresa expressed was also a fruit of the communion of other charisms which came together in her, like a gift from the Church for her doctrine and her sanctity. In fact, she received much from the charisms of the Religious Orders with which she was in contact - the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans. Through the sharing of ideas and experiences with her confessors and followers, she found the wisdom that comes from the one and only Master, present among those who speak of him or are united in his name.[7] The teaching of the Church is the unfailing expression of this wisdom.●

1Chiara Lubich, Frammenti, own translation (Rome: Citta Nuova, 1963).
2The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus, written by herself, trans. David Lewis, (London: Burns, Oates, & Co., 1870), p.54.
3The Life of St. Teresa, op. Cit., p.206
4St. Teresa of Avila, The Interior Castle, trans. & ed. E. Allison Peers, (New York: Image Books, 1961),p. 217
5Teresa of Avila, Relations, 111, 9.
6The Interior Castle, op. cit., p. 229.
7Cf. The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus, op. cit., XXXIV, 19,p. 292.

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ous points of view: the itinerary of human thought toward God; what the Old Testament says about him; what the New Testament says about him, etc. Naturally, in developing these studies, there will be a moment when each one of us will work alone. However, it will be a solitude that is prayer, uniting ourselves with God. But afterwards we must meet together, in order to make one book of the entire topic "God," in which each of these individual studies will be a chapter. If the work is not done together, there will not be the book we have in mind which is an expression of the unity in Jesus that we have built among us. In order for this to be so, it is clear that each chapter must be continually compared with the others, redone, re-thought, reelaborated, etc.

It is with all this in mind that we have prepared our program for the Marian School. Why do we call it "Marian?" It is not so much because we will talk of Mary (even though the study of Mary is a theological theme) but because we are dealing with a theology that views every aspect "from" Mary, "in" Mary. We would like to speak of a theology that is completely "clothed" with Mary.

Obviously, it is not possible to achieve all this in a short time. It will take years of exercise, trials, mistakes, purifications, and pruning. It is such a big undertaking that it requires not only time and unity among us, but also studies on the texts of our spirituality, because that is the ground upon which the school is based. There lies the source that nourishes all the schools of the Movement. What we are preparing is a new wineskin for a new wine, and we must be ready to start all over again each moment when we see that the existing wineskin is already too old for the wine that it must hold.

In this spirit, we have prepared a program which takes six years to complete. The first year, the topic will be "Jesus." We begin with

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A STUDY BY FATHER FORESI
the children of God in the New Testament

In the afternoon Marisa Cerini presented a study done by Father Foresi on "children" in the New Testament: the children of God. This study provides a biblical foundation for a writing by Chiara Lubich on the vocation of the focolarini, and serves as a commentary to the writing.

Among other things the presentation emphasized a fundamental characteristic required at the Marian school: simplicity.

Chiara's writing describes the focolarini (what they are and what they are called to be), as well as each member of the Work of Mary. "Within the Church," Chiara writes, "the 'friars' remind us of brotherhood among people. The focolarini instead remind us that we are children of God, because the Spirit has made them discover that God is Love, a Father.

"They are **children:** *children of God the Father and Mary. They believe in love . . .*

"They are enchanted by wisdom just as children are avid for milk. . .

"They are happy for the light, but more so for love, charity. Their words are full of confidence.

"They rejoice for the unexpected; it is the contribution of their Father, who they have unconsciously always present.

"They are not attached to anything; they are free and full of joy.

"They go through the world without fear. And the world belongs to them.

"They are simple and natural. They are humble because they don't exist for themselves; they live for the others."

Father Foresi's study explains this reality of the divine father-child relationship which comes from Jesus and is shared by his disciples, by means of texts from the New Testament and related commentaries of various authors.

Matthew and Luke give us the prayer that Jesus taught: the "Our Father."

Father Pasquale Foresi, to whom the direction of the school has been entrusted. Below to the left we see one of the professors of the "Mystical Body Institute" at Loppiano together with a student during an exam. Here the future focolarini and focolarine receive their formation.

Father Foresi's commentary on this prayer in Matthew says:

"'Our Father . . .' (Mt.6:9): all the prayers of Jesus that have been handed down by the gospels start with the invocation, 'Father.' This is the translation of the Aramaic 'abba'[1] which is the familiar way of referring to God, used also in the early Christian communities.[2] In Judaism, referring to God with the familiar expression 'My Father' was avoided. At most they used the Hebrew term 'ab,' which means 'Father.' In the Old Testament it is continually affirmed that God is the Father of his people (Dt.32:6). With Jesus this truth acquired an entirely new meaning: the divine life of the Son of God is communicated to the faithful by means of participation."[3]

In the commentary on this passage in Luke, Father Foresi writes:

"The 'Our Father' of Matthew has a Jewish flavor (abinu); that of Luke instead — 'Father,' 'abba' (Lk.11:2) — is more specifically Christian. Jesus, in fact, taught us and invited us to pray as he prayed. (In general, in the New Testament, the use of the expression 'Father' indicated a special relationship between Jesus and God). Jesus wants us to be aware of and happy for our new status as children in the Son. It is precisely because they were aware of this special divine filiation that the early Christians used to pray in this way: 'Abba.'"[4]

We read in the gospel of Matthew: "At this time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' So he called a little child to him and set the child in front of them. Then he said, 'I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck.'" (Mt.18:1-6).

The commentary points out that: "The problem of preeminence (a problem that exists in all societies of all times), was particularly present in the Jewish society at that time. It couldn't help but be felt in the new religious community that was gathering around Christ . . ." Yet he ". . . gives a disconcerting answer: in the kingdom of heaven, that is, in the Christian society, real greatness lies in smallness, just as true wealth according to the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, is found in poverty."

Therefore Jesus answers the disciples: "If you don't convert . . ," which literally means: "If you don't go back."

"The true secret of greatness consists in going back to the past and reassuming the positive qualities (simplicity, humility, etc.) of childhood. 'You will never enter,' Jesus maintains that every aspiration to preeminence and to honors constitutes an insurmontable obstacle for the access to the messianic kingdom . . ." "These little ones. . ." The authentic followers of Christ do not have any feelings of superiority, nor do they aspire to this. Therefore, they are "greater," that is, dearest to God.[5]

A well-known passage of Luke says: "It was then that, filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, he said, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children." (Lk.10:21).

"From the learned and the clever . . . to mere children:" the first term refers to the category of people who believe themselves to be self-sufficient, and have no need for Jesus' revelation of salvation. They rely only on the wisdom of this world in order to solve all of their problems, including that of salvation. Instead, ". . . the little ones . ..." are those open to salvation as a gift that comes from the Father. They can be recognized by the willingness with which they give themselves to God. In other words they are

the poor, the humble, the simple, the repentant sinners of which the gospel speaks."[6]

Paul, in his letter to the Romans emphasizes the fact that we have received ". . . the spirit of sons and it makes us cry out 'Abba Father.' The spirit himself confirms to us in our spirit that we are children of God." (Rom.8: 15-16). He writes to the Galatians: "The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts; the spirit that cries out 'Abba Father;' and it is this that makes you a son, you are not a slave anymore; and if God has made you son then he has made you heir." (Gal.4:6-7).

Therefore, even though we are not children of God, we become so by a divine initiative. God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts *so that ". . . animated by the same spirit of Jesus, we may turn toward the heavenly Father, calling him with the same familiar name (abba, dad, my father — really in the informal language of children) that Jesus alone used during his earthly life."*[7]

Peter writes to the Christians in Asia Minor that, void of any malice ". . .like newborn babies . ..." they should desire only ". . . spiritual and genuine milk . . ." that is, desire only of being nurtured by the word of God in order to "grow" in fidelity to him. (see Pt. 2:2-3)

And Paul — concludes Father Foresi's study — exhorts the Christians of Corinth in this way: "Brothers you are not to be childish in your outlook, you can be babies as far as wickedness is concerned, but mentally you must be adult." (1 Cor.14:20). ●

1) Cf. Mk. 14:36.
2) Cf. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6.
3) "Matteo," ed. A. Lancellotti, own translation, (Rome: Pauline Press, 1978), p. 95.
4) "Luca" ed. C. Ghidelli, own translation, (Rome: Pauline Press, 1978),p.256.
5) "Matteo," pp. 241-144.
6) "Luca," p. 244.
7) "Lettere ai Galati e ai Romani," ed. U. Vanni, (Rome:Pauline Press, 1978), p. 50.

PROGRAM OF THIS SCHOOL

(continued from page 20)

The large meeting hall of the Mariapolis Center at Rocca di Papa was filled to capacity on the day of the inauguration of the Marian School. The leaders of of the Movement from all over the world were present together with the future professors of the school.

him, because Christ reveals God to us. The second year, the topic of study will be "God." The third, the "Church", seen as the mystical body of Christ, the "new Man." (This topic corresponds to what is usually referred to as "supernatural anthropology"). The fourth year we continue with the Church, but this time seen as the one who offers and accomplishes the salvation of the world. The Church is seen then as the bearer, custodian and interpreter of the Word of God, as Sacrament, and as Sacraments. The topic of the fifth year will be "the Church and the world," while that of the sixth, "the world fulfilled in God," new heavens and new earths. We are all awaiting this reality, but it is already present, because where the risen Christ and Mary assumed into heaven are present, the new heavens and new earths already exist. Our task consists in seeing the deep sense of the life that we are trying to live in its right perspective.

To begin with we have delineated a more detailed program for the first year, on Jesus. It consists, as I was saying, of different topics, each one of which should constitute a chapter of this "ideal" book that has to be composed.

There are very many titles under which these topics are to be developed. We will have to limit them to thirty or forty pages each, using simple language, in order to make ourselves understood first of all because we know that in the end, in these chapters, love is worth more than the content of the book. However, we will try to say in these chapters everything that can be said on the topic.

We will begin with a chapter on the revelation of Jesus in the New Testament. It is necessary to begin with what the New Testament says about Jesus. While talking about the New Testament, we will also make reference to the announcement of Jesus in the Old Testament, seen in the light of Christianity.

The second topic will be the understanding of the mystery of Jesus which the Church carries within itself as it has matured over the centuries. For example, we will touch on the immense work accomplished by the Fathers of the Church, and in the first seven ecumenical councils through which our Christian faith, that we repeat today in our creed, was defined, almost in its entirety. Later we will study the great theological synthesis of the Middle Ages, modern and contemporary theology trying to consider insofar as we are able, the many needs of contemporary Christology: for example Christ the liberator, or the emphasis that many theologians today put on the passion of Christ, seeing it as the particular event that makes us understand God in a new way.

Here we would like to avoid the omission of a large segment which is often sacrificed in theological studies — that is, the great currents of spiritual life that have done more for the understanding of Christian theology, than the theologians themselves. There never would have been a St. Bonaventure without St. Francis. Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas without St. Dominic. Another example is the contribution that St. Margaret Mary Alacoque gave to help us understand the mystery of the heart of Jesus which is not just a matter of devotion. It means that God in Christ loves us with a human heart; that the human love of Christ is divinized, and becomes a dimension of the love with which God loves us. This underlines forcibly the role that the humanity of Christ has in our relationship with God. Without this saint, we would not have had the further development later given by the theologians to this aspect.

Then we shall consider the great Orthodox Christology, where we find beautiful things, and the protestant one, which today in a particular way is opening areas of great interest for all.

Next we shall consider the mystery of Jesus and Mary. Even if we have to admit that we are not yet capable of formulating a "Marian" theology, we shall still speak of Mary. Having developed the understanding of Christ in the Church in the chapters considered up to this point, we shall ask ourselves: what is the relationship existing between the mystery of Christ and Mary? We shall do this because one fact is certain — one cannot speak of Christ without speaking of Mary. She always accompanied him, from the Annunciation of the angel Gabriel, to the one of the angels in Bethlehem, up to the cross, to Pentecost. . . .

The purpose
of our studies
is then
to love God
with our intelligence,
in order
to achieve this aim:
I want to get to know
this Person
whom I love
above all things.

Having finished with this, we shall consider another topic: Jesus in the life of every person. In other words, what does this Jesus whom we have studied, mean in my life now?

We shall divide this study into two sections: first, the ethics of Christ. What does the ethical life lived "in" Christ mean (not "following" Christ but "in" Christ)? What relationship is there between the ethical demands of Jesus (for example the beatitudes) and the various moral theories which are in vogue today?

However, it is not enough to speak of Christ's ethics. What interests us is a life with God in Christ, what we call the ascetic or the mystical life. What meaning does Jesus, God made man, have in spiritual life? What connotation does he give to the mystical life? Mystical life in fact is not an exclusively Christian phenomenon; it is found also in Islam, in Hinduism, etc. However, Christian mysticism has its own particular characteristics.

Another topic will be Christ in non-Christian religions. For example, in Judaism, what do Hebrews say about Christ, especially today?

Also in Islam, the Koran speaks about Jesus; Moslem theologians have spoken about Jesus. A great Moslem mystic, Al Hallay, died on the cross repeating his love for Christ. Then we can look at Hinduism, not so much because great Hindus such as Gandhi, Ramakrishna, and Vinoba have spoken of Christ, but because Hinduism has its own doctrine concerning incarnation. It is important to speak of it — especially because of the confusion which could be created between the two doctrines — to see what the difference is between them. We will even take note of certain syncretistic religions found in some contemporary settings, which have a certain importance. I'm thinking of voodooism and of certain hippie phenomena, in which Jesus has a role. . . .

Finally, we will consider Christ and the culture of the contemporary Western world. What does this culture say of Jesus? We have thought of three topics: the Christ of the philosophers; Christ and marxism (certain contemporary authors, like Mackovec, have spoken of a Jesus of the atheists. There is an attempt here to use Jesus and compile his words into a text which would allow Marxists to accept him as a great socialist, without having to change their outlook on supernatural things.) In the end, we will look at Jesus in psychology, either in the field of psychology itself, or in the sector of psycho-analysis.

As a conclusion, if we are able we would like to compile a final synthesis, summing up everything that we have said. It will be an attempt, as much as it is possible, to put our own considerations in focus, considerations which will be always present, but which at the end, we would like to express more explicitly. That is, we want to be able to speak of Jesus as we see him, who he is *for us.*

FAMILY LIFE

THE BLANKET

Twenty-five years ago I was going throught the most dramatic moment of my married life. So much tension had built up over the years between my husband and I that it only took the slightest thing to set him off on a furious tirade of accusations and recriminations aimed at totally humiliating me.

One day he asked me to buy him a blanket for his car. But as soon as he set eyes on the one I bought he went into a rage: I had terrible taste, the colors were revolting, the wool wasn't good, and so on. And when he had said all the worst things he could think of he added: "Never will I put such a horror of a blanket in my car!"

Humiliated by this outburst I put the blanket away at the bottom of the linen closet.

One cold winter's night several months later, my husband, in his customary arrogant and commanding tone of voice, demanded something to put over his knees because he was cold. I remembered the much maligned blanket lying forgotten at the bottom of the closet. Would he remember it? I took advantage of the fact that the room was dimly lit because we were watching T.V. I fetched it and gave it to him.

He made no objection, so evidently he'd completely forgotten that nerve-wracking scene of some months before.

And so a new routine began, that was to continue for years. He demanded and I obeyed with resignation. I didn't have the courage to refuse but at the same time I couldn't bring myself to do that small service willingly.

I struggled bitterly with myself, swinging from a reaction of fierce rebellion to one of deep discouragement. I felt crushed and broken, incapable of finding my real dignity.

There were times I tried to put a bit of an effort into doing things willingly, but I was tormented by the fear that this made me even more of a slave. And so another few years went by.

Then one day I read a commentary about those words from the Scriptures: "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you." It said that all we had to do was start from the little things. For example, we could start by folding our blankets carefully when making our bed in the morning, as though it were the most important thing we had to do in that moment, doing it with all our heart, as though nothing else mattered.

This very simple example really struck me because it was something I could easily do. I suddenly thought of that blanket I carried to my husband so unwillingly every evening and then threw over the back of a chair near his bed at night when he'd finished with it. From then on, every evening when I brought it back to the bedroom I folded it with special care in such a way that it would be left in order, and not like something just thrown there and forgotten. In fact, once, my little grandson saw me folding the blanket. He was really surprised at my care so I told him that this was the most-loved blanket in the world.

Ever since then, whenever my husband demanded that blanket I found the strength to get up from my armchair joyfully to bring it to him. Soon, instead of waiting for him to ask me for it I began to get it for him without him saying anything. I even began to place it over his knees with a special care and love.

I began to realize that this moment every evening was becoming the most beautiful moment of my day and this was due to the love I managed to put into this little daily action even though I never

"Ever since then, I found the strength to get up from my armchair joyfully to bring the blanket to him."

once received a "please" or "thank you" for my efforts.

But this didn't matter to me any more: I had learnt to do things out of love. I no longer expected love in return from my husband or from others. Only the One who sees what is done in secret knew of the affection with which I carried out that little task while the others were completely unaware of it.

And little by little the tension between my husband and myself began to diminish until it finally disappeared altogether. The love with which I had begun to do everything — regardless of how I was treated in return — began to touch my husband and every once in a while a "please" or "thank you" would be uttered.

Now that my health has deteriorated seriously he, who during the whole of our married life had never once been concerned about me, is anxious and worried. He suffers for me and demonstrates in so many little and unexpected ways how much he cares. The other evening as we sat in front of the T.V. I asked him if he was cold. He said he was but suddenly when he saw I was about to get up he jumped up like a youngster, despite his 75 years saying: "No, no, you stay where you are; this time I'm going to get the blanket to put over your knees."

R.C.

Images FOR words

"To act
immediately.
To do everything.
To do it well.
To do it joyfully:
whatever You want
of me now,
even if it goes
far beyond
my strength
and asks
for my life."

Pope Paul VI

Maria Caampued

The young and the Gospel

One day when I was in Kindergarten, there were lots of people in art and I was in art. Matthew came along and said that he wanted to go to art, but I wanted to stay there. But I realized that it would be better to let him get in art because I knew he had Jesus in him, so I went to the board to take my name from art and I went to the games table. Matthew went to art and he had lots of fun.

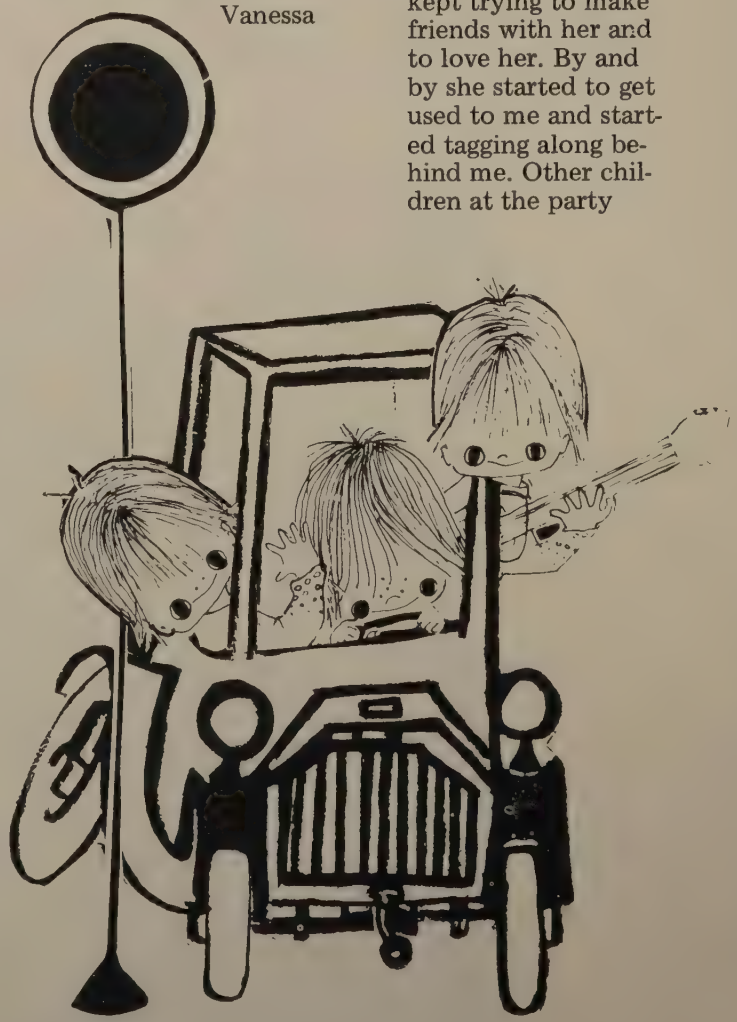
Arend

One day when I was going into the cafeteria at school, my friend, Robert, was crying. I asked him what was the matter. He said that he didn't have 25¢, for a snack and his mother wouldn't give him 25¢. So I went and looked in my money case because I remembered about being a Gen and I only found 24¢, so I asked my other friend, Linus, for a penney and he gave me one. I gave the 25¢ to Robert. Then I had no money for milk, but I got the hundredford because Linus gave m me 12¢ for milk.

Jeffrey

Today I was home alone; both my parents were gone. There was a program on T.V., but my parents didn't want me to watch it. I really wanted to watch it, so I turned on the television. Then I thought about it for a second. If my Mom and Dad were Jesus and he told me not to watch the program. So I turned off the television and read a book instead, and I was happy.

Vanessa



One time when I was at a birthday party, there was a girl who was a bit strange and no one was playing with her because she would always pull their hair and hit them. But I saw that she was lonesome because no one was playing with her.

So I went up to her and said "hi." She immediately hit me and made a face. She did this a couple of times but I still kept trying to make friends with her and to love her. By and by she started to get used to me and started tagging along behind me. Other children at the party wanted me to play with them but I knew that God wanted me to play with her.

After a while I started getting tired because she kept wanting to play the same game over and over again.

But I knew that I had to love to the end and then I remembered how much we should love one another. I thought to myself, "What's so big about playing with someone that it's hard to play with? It's very small compared to giving your life for another." So I played with her and tried to love her the best I could. She also stopped hitting too. When I left I was very happy because I had made it to love her all the way to the end, and I felt that also she had started to love me back.

Marijo

When we were playing in the basement and my sister wanted my doll that I was playing with. I didn't want to give it to her. I put the doll in the first place of my life. But then I thought of Jesus and so I put him in the first place of my life instead of the doll. I gave the doll to my sister.

Colleen

Love never ends

The following article is based on a television interview given by Mother Maria some three weeks before she died on May 23rd, 1978.

When I became a religious I had to give myself completely to God, I had to let myself be completely taken over by him. Today many years later and only a few weeks before I die I know that I was right; I have no regrets.

In return for the tiny offering on my part he has rewarded me a hundredfold; he has more than fulfilled all my hopes. Over the years I have experienced a deepening relationship with my God, one in which I have grown in love and in being loved and I know now that the more one lives for God, the more one is able to live for his people.

As my experience of God's love has grown it has brought me so much joy and happiness, such as a wife or mother knows as she enjoys the love of her husband or children. It is a happiness that no one can take away, no one and nothing. In this love I have all that I need — it seems maybe a little strange that at a time when I am coming to the end of my life, and physical pain is a growing factor I seem to lack nothing, and I am still happy!

As a human being pain has always been abhorrent to me — nature resists anything that hurts — and we were surely created, not for pain but for joy. I have found that the love of Jesus is more powerful than any pain or suffering. As I am now so much more aware of my physical weaknesses, I know much more that the mercy of God is greater than all of them together.

by Mother Maria Achillia Vergote, Mother Superior of the Sisters of Ingelmunster, Belgium

I turn to the Scriptures in which I have rediscovered the basis for my life! And I read of David — the smallest in his family, and the youngest, when he was chosen by God to be king.

I read of David, without weapons and armor, going out against Goliath, trusting in the strength of God, and I read how in spite of all his failings and failures he remained full of confidence that God would overcome all things, and was humble enough to put his trust in him completely! What joy he found in that trust! Even as king he showed his joy by playing the harp and by dancing in front of the Ark!

I have always loved life, and I always will — I know that after my dying I shall live again to meet Jesus face to face. It doesn't worry me! I just seem to grow all the time in my finding in Jesus all the faith and love I need. I think that in these last weeks I have really discovered the wonder of the prayer of Jesus just before he died — the one St. John records. In it he says that he loves us as the Father loves him! This is amazing love, far greater than the love of all mothers, fathers, children; greater than the love of all friends. How can anyone be lost with a love like this?

Two friends do not have to be talking to each other all the time, they are simply together; they know that they love each other. In a wonderful way it isn't necessary for them to be continually strenghtening their love with words, it is a living reality, a wonderful unity. I have found this unity more and more in my daily Communion. It is a silent unity of my soul with Christ, silent and very simple. I know that he is so close to me as to be part of me, it is a knowledge that no one can take from me; no one and nothing.

I feel no anxiety about dying. I am not sure whether a moment of darkness is yet to come, I cannot control this, only go through it; but I rely entirely on God. I am not anxious about it because I am sure that in that too, I will find his love. •

(continued from page 4)

4. In the light of this promise and this Abraham-like call I look with you toward the destiny and the role of your people among the peoples. I gladly pray with you for the fullness of *shalom* for all your brethern of the same faith and the same people and also for the land to which all Jews look with special reverence.

Our century witnessed the first pilgrimage of a pope in the Holy Land. Here, in concluding, I can repeat the words of Paul VI at his entrance into Jerusalem: "By your prayers, invoke with us upon this land, unique in the world, which God has visited, his graces of concord and of peace. Let us here, all together, implore the grace of true brotherhood between all men and among all peoples . . . 'May those who love you prosper! May peace be within your walls, prosperity in your buildings; . . . I will say, Peace be within you! . . . I will pray for your good' (Ps. 122, 6-9)."

May all peoples in Jerusalem be blessed and reconciled in Abraham He, the ineffable, of whom all his creation speaks. He who does not constrain mankind to the good but guides it nevertheless. He who announces our destiny and is silent. He who has chosen us for all to his people. He who guides us on his roads in his future.

May his name be praised. Amen. ●

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Focolare posters

NEW! NEW! NEW!

A new color poster (15" x 18") is now available at all the Focolare Centers. The other four posters (also 15" x 18") can still be obtained as well. All can be ordered by mail from:
Focolare Movement, P.O. Box 496,
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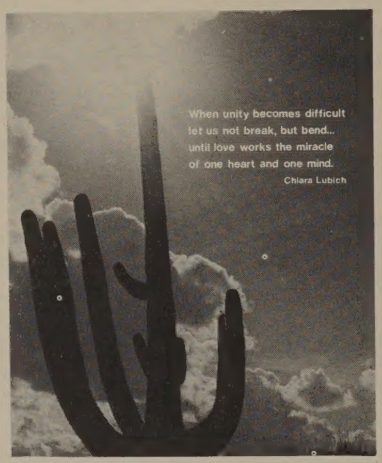
When unity becomes difficult
let us not break, but bend...
until love works the miracle
of one heart and one mind.
Chiara Lubich

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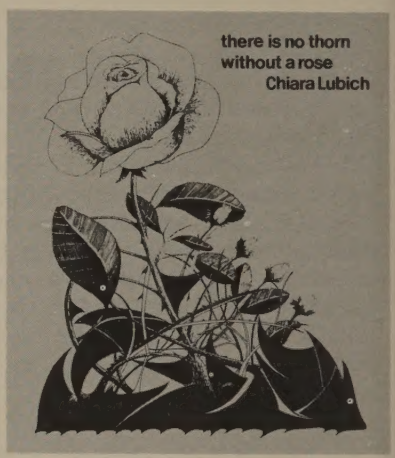

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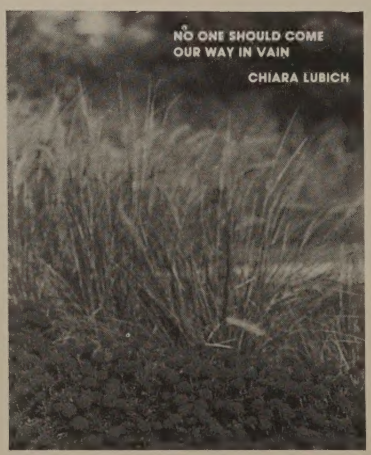

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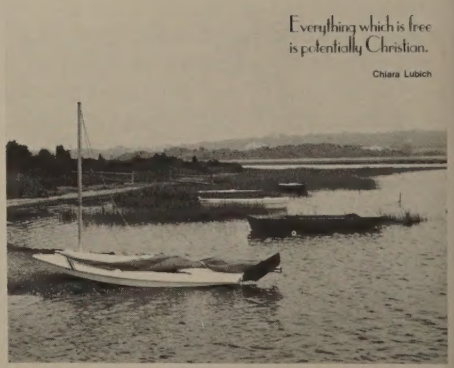

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What is the ocolare Movement?

HE BEGINNINGS

The Focolare Movement began in 1943, in Italy. Chiara Lubich, ith a small group of girls, realized in the midst of the total estruction of World War II, that God is the only one worth ving for. Hence they began to place the Gospel in the center of eir lives. The testament of Jesus became their Ideal: "That all ay be one . . . that the world may know that you have sent me, id that you have loved them as you have loved me . . . " (Jn.17: 3). The life lived by these first girls, the spiritual way they spon-neously followed, gave rise to a form of spirituality proper to the ocolare Movement. It represents a powerful means of introducing e Gospel into modern life.

HO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

The name "Focolarini" takes its origin from the Italian word fire" and suggests the idea of "carriers of fire."

Single men and women live in separate communities called ocolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among emselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a ay. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, id obedience. They work as other lay men and women in regular bs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their milies, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's ocolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same nity. They are called "Married Focolarini."

HE VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers, who are also called the "Volunteers of God," ould like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel pirit. For this reason they remain in their jobs and in their pro-ssions in order to vivify them with this spirit.

Their aim is to help form a society made of men and women ho are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then ring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, c.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead the realization of new structures of society.

HE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP

The largest membership of the Movement is made up of men, omen, and young people of all social conditions who are free of y formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their free d willing acceptance of its spirit. They keep in touch with the ovement and with one another through large or small gatherings, blications, correspondence, and personal contact.

People with other commitments, even those bound to religious stitutions, can form part of the Movement too because the ovement exists wherever its spirit is lived. People of non-Chris-an religions are also counted among the Movement's friends. so those who owe no allegiance to any faith are often attracted one or another of the Movement's aspects.

EN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another ovement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and e Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age oups. "Gen" stands for new generation.

Thousands of young people all over the world have been attrac-d by the spirituality of unity. Their number continues to grow.

At the core of this large group of youth, are Gen who have mmitted themselves to living the Gospel message of love. The en use all possible means to share with other youth the conviction ey have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the otive for everything they do.

THE MAIN TALKS OF
THE 1980 MARIAPOLIS

Chiara Lubich

WHEN OUR LOVE IS CHARITY

At the beginning of 1980 John Paul II addressed the following words to some members of the Focolare Movement.
"Charity, love comes first of all from God and returns to him, 'God is Love,' says St. John. . . . and also, 'How can anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, love God, whom he has not seen?' (1Jn. 4:20).
"The Christian vocation, and particularly the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, demands that this truth concerning God and man be put into practice. I encourage you to go deeply into it and live it. . . ."
The Focolare Movement is — as its foundress Chiara Lubich states — a concrete experience of Charity. In this book she speaks about this experience.

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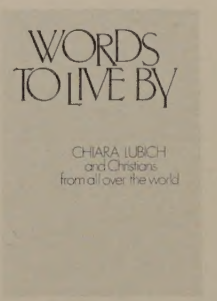
NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!



WORDS TO LIVE BY

Chiara Lubich and Christians from all over the world.

Chiara Lubich is one of those people who have taken the Gospel seriously, discovered the life that is in it, and wished to share it with others. This is the reason why, for over thirty years, the members of the Focolare Movement have chosen a sentence of the Gospel each month and, day after day, have tried to put it into practice.
Now, millions of copies of the "Word of Life" and its commentary are distributed each month and it is lived throughout the whole world, for the Word of God is dynamic and communicative by its very nature. When it is lived, it changes people and transforms the universe.
This is what this book would like to show. It has been written during the course of a whole year. It is drawn straight from life.

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